

Re: Restoring Internet Freedom  
Docket 17-108

Dear FCC,

Internet freedom and consumers have been harmed by Internet Service Providers before, and any elimination of net neutrality regulation will be immediately exploited to the harm of consumers.

As a previous Verizon customer I was directly harmed by their throttling of Netflix. They did this by holding their paying customers hostage, demanding ransom from Netflix, in exchange for outrageous peering terms previously unheard of anywhere. For over a year Netflix was nearly unusable through no fault of their own, while Verizon's own video services and subscription TV services were uninterrupted. To get to Netflix, Verizon chose to limit capacity to a major internet backhaul provider, Level 3. This meant that not only was Netflix performance degraded, but so were many other services. Despite having Internet advertised as the fastest in the country I often couldn't maintain a stable connection to my coworkers, costing me significant time and money as I work exclusively from home.

This situation is well documented and led to provisions in the Open Internet Order that allow the FCC to provide much needed oversight to these peering arrangements. I already pay exorbitant internet access fees. As a software developer I also pay to have my applications hosted on the Internet and pay for the data I send to my users. Verizon, Cox, Comcast, or anyone else shouldn't be able to arbitrarily make people like me pay a third or fourth time by inventing new toll bridges and ratcheting up the cost of internet access while their infrastructure maintenance/expansion/replacement costs go down every year. American ISPs have made it clear time and again if they are given this power they will abuse it.

Removing Net Neutrality rules also creates a perverse incentive. The vast majority of internet access is provided by companies who also sell TV subscriptions, and many of them sell many other digital products as well. The vast majority of Americans have only 1 ISP available. Allowing ISPs to throttle at their own discretion incentivises degrading streaming video and degrading any and all products that compete with their own offerings. The regulated monopoly they operate in and the essential nature of Internet Access ensures this strategy is likely to push customers to use their ISP's products. We have nowhere else to go and giving up the Internet is not an option.

Internet access is an essential part of life now. Like electricity before it we need to start treating the Internet like the essential utility it is. The Open Internet Order is just the start of that. Removing it would be a giant leap backwards.

Thank you,

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